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O D E

TO

THE MIKADO OF JAPAN.

BY

R. H. HORNE,

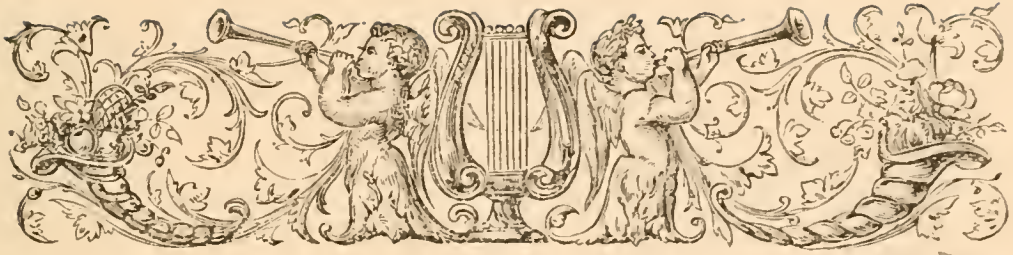
AUTHOR OF "ORION;" THE TRAGEDIES OF "COSMO DE' MEDICI;" "GREGORY VII.;"
"THE DEATH OF MARLOWE;" "BALLAD ROMANCES;" ETC.



LONDON :

1873.

Decidedly the Mikado of Japan is the most resolute throned Reformer of his day. He has just issued a decree by which the library of the ex-Tycoon, containing a hundred thousand volumes, is thrown open to the public, whether Japanese or foreigners.—*Daily News*, Sept. 5, 1872.]



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TO

THE MIKADO OF JAPAN.

— ♦ —

I.

FIRST of thy race—first of thy nation's Kings!
Who see'st and weigh'st the world by reason's light,
Not judging by old Custom's sight,
But by the rolling tide of men and things,—
Thou may'st sow broad-cast o'er thy brilliant land
New thoughts and hopes as glowing as thine own,
Burying grim Idols in thy deep sea-sand,
That men may kneel at shrines from slavery won.
Those slaveries of soul, designed
By the close-veil'd mysterious power
Which Priest-craft bred for Thee, and all,
By thine own sceptre fall!
Their depths thy piercing brain hath counter-mined—
The fabric sinks in one black thunder-shower—
And Life's expanding wings flame up behind!

II.

The mind of man
 Once open'd, claims a boundless span ;
 Thou canst no more
 Contract its shore
 Than make a flood-tide ebb at thy command.
 Take then thy stand
 On Nature's constant love and youth,
 Her heart and truth ;—
 And thy resolve to search and weigh
 All creeds that ferment 'neath this pregnant day,
 Then choose the loftiest—hold thou fast,
 And thy rare-flowered crown shall ever last
 In star-like record when its bloom hath passed !

III.

There was a Dome, like midnight
 Lit up by blood-red lightning !
 And deep within
 A demon din,—
 With many a sight
 Of ghastly horror whitening
 Faces and forms, e'en while the flames were brightening !
 The screams of those wild massacres
 Long echoed down the shuddering years ;
 And yet we know the self-same creed
 For which those proselyting martyrs died,
 Hath caused unnumbered victims thus to bleed
 Before its symbols deified !
 O, GREAT CREATIVE SPIRIT !
 Can man inherit

Thine Image, yet disgrace it—
 Distort and half erase it,
 Till Nature scarce can trace it,
 While to such night-dreams crowd on crowd,
 Sheep—swine—and sages—
 Pray secretly, or fierce and loud,
 Blasting a land for ages !

IV.

Heap'd clouds at noon !
 Night's high festoon !
 The piled-up books of the TYCOON
 Were like the mountains of the moon !
 Glorious to dream of—but to climb
 Impossible, or to divine,
 Grow grapes on, olives, or to mine,
 Or put to any use of human time !
 But thou, MIKADO, thou hast spoken
 A new word—and all locks are broken !
 The gates gape wide—
 The rising tide
 Brings minds of every nation side by side ;
 And secrets deep as Southern skies,
 In chronicles, porcelain, metals, woods, silks, dyes,
 Steel, ivory, garden-beds—and lies
 Of mortal Pagods, meet all eyes !

V.

Deal with us—and believe that we
 Deal honestly ;

Be friendly, as you find us friends,—
 Each having his own ends,
 Frankly and openly !
 Beware of Hell-born War !
 Earth's branding scar
 Through History !
 Degrading man the beast beneath,
 Who wars but from necessity,
 And builds no Glory on his fellows' death !

VI.

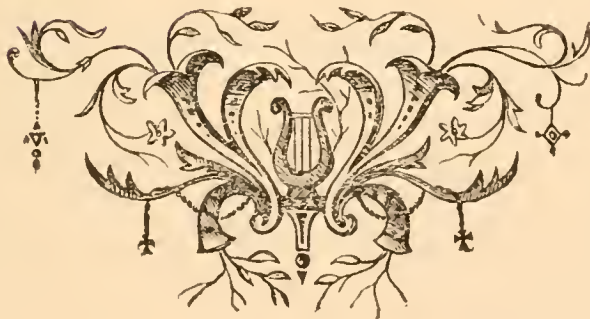
WISE SOVEREIGN ! who hath sent from dazzling seas
 Thy Envoys to far-distant shores,
 Be *thou* not dazzled by the swarming bees—
 Their human hives and stores !
 Their armies, ships, magnificence—
 Nor by each fine Court-eloquence ;—
 But note what hath been won
 'Midst a few sands, called 'years,'
 From Earth's inexhaustible wonders !—from the Sun !—
 From man's soul-swaddling fears !—
 By Intellect and Science, and the Will
 To know what can be known, while yearning still
 Up tow'rds the vision'd foot-stool of God's throne !

VII.

MIKADO ! be not sudden to conceive
 Love—hatred—or indifference—
 But each illuminated tome receive
 Which Europe old, or young America,

Before thee proudly may lay bare,—
Cross-questioning each by generous Common-sense ;
As one who searching many a beach,
Selects and stores the best from each.

Thus act—and in futurity
Thy country's rational idol thou wilt be ;
The ancient splendours of Japan
Will dwindle to a painted fan,
And the rich flowers of all her Kings,
Beside thy *fruits*, be childish things !



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